

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 094 280

CG 009 013

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TITLE The Differential Influence of Three Teacher Consultation Techniques on Feelings of Self and Peer Acceptance of Children.
PUB DATE Apr 74
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the American Personnel and Guidance Association Convention (New Orleans, Louisiana, April 1974)
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.75 HC-\$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Classroom Environment; Consultants; *Consultation Programs; Counselor Functions; *Elementary School Counseling; *Group Discussion; Learning; Speeches; *Teacher Improvement; Teachers

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the productivity of three differing focuses for organizing teacher group consultation activities. These focuses were: (1) the curriculum, i.e., individualizing instructional materials; (2) personalizing classroom interactions; and (3) personalizing classroom interactions through classroom videotapings. The productivity of the teacher group consultations was measured by changes in the degree of likeability among the children, i.e., their Peer Acceptance scores. Significant gains were observed in the Peer Acceptance scores of those children whose teachers participated in group consultations focusing on personalizing classroom interactions both in the presence and the absence of classroom videotapings. Similar findings were not observed for those children whose teachers participated in group consultations focusing on individualizing instructional materials. The results of the study suggested that more benefits accrue to children when counselors provide teachers with opportunities to personalize their classroom interactions than when teachers have opportunities to individualize their instructional materials. The findings also indicated that elementary school counselors who provide systematically organized group consultations with teachers can make a positive impact on the learning environment of children.

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THE DIFFERENTIAL INFLUENCE OF
THREE TEACHER CONSULTATION TECHNIQUES ON
FEELINGS OF SELF AND PEER ACCEPTANCE
OF CHILDREN

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1974 APGA Convention
New Orleans, Louisiana
Division RESP-5-B
April 11, 1974

CG 009 013

Marriott Hotel
Room C
11:00-12:15 P.M.

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THE DIFFERENTIAL INFLUENCE OF THREE TEACHER CONSULTATION TECHNIQUES
ON CHILDREN'S FEELINGS OF SELF AND PEER ACCEPTANCE

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The elementary school counselor is described as a school functionary who facilitates the creation of effective learning climates. The problem of helping to create effective learning climates is an admittedly complex one. Nevertheless, the counselor in elementary school settings is expected to respond to this challenge through involvement in his three major functions: counseling, consulting, and coordinating. It was the second of these functions, consulting, with which the present investigation was concerned.

Elementary school counselors serve as consultants to a variety of populations which include parents, principals, other school specialists, and even children themselves. Perhaps the most important group of school functionaries for whom the counselor provides consultation services is the teaching faculty of the school. Teachers are seen by some to be the prime resource with whom the counselor never loses touch. Thus, counselors serve as resource persons to teachers either in individual conferences or in group sessions.

In teacher consultation groups, the discussion topics can range from alternative control techniques for disruptive class-

room behavior to the accomodation of differing learning styles or other individual differences in child behavior. It was felt that teacher group consultation opportunities were a vital dimension of elementary school guidance services, and several notions guided this perspective. First, it was felt that if teachers are provided opportunities to examine the impact of their classroom behavior on the behavior of others, then benefits would accrue not merely to teachers, but to the children they teach (Faust, 1968; Henry, 1957; MacDougall and Brown, 1973). Secondly, it was reasoned that the isolation experienced by teachers in self-contained classrooms denied them the feedback critical to their teaching effectiveness (Wayland, 1964).

Not only did their low-visibility preclude access to systematic and meaningful evaluation techniques, but teachers were also denied opportunities to observe the techniques utilized by their peers. Most professions provide their colleagues with professional growth opportunities for exchanging ideas concerning what has been successful and what has not. Generally speaking, cross-fertilization opportunities for elementary school classroom teachers do not occur on a systematically organized basis. Therefore, if teachers are to be helped toward more effective and efficient interpretations of their teaching responsibilities, then systematically organized teacher group consultation opportunities to examine mutual problems and share ideas should be provided (Dinkmeyer & Carlson, 1973). Further, the elementary school counselor's consulting function should hold the potential for responding to this need. Therefore, explorations of differential

interpretations of the counselor's consulting function seemed implied.

Problem Statement

Historically, effective classroom learning environments have enjoyed a variety of definitions but inherent in each is a concern for individual differences. Consultation opportunities for individualizing classroom instruction have been provided teachers, but these opportunities have normally focused on the curriculum and instructional materials. Fewer opportunities have been provided for teachers to explore ways of personalizing their classroom instruction.

The critical nature of affective learnings recommends attention to this aspect of the child's school experiences. It was felt that systematically organized group consultations focusing on teaching behaviors which respond to affective needs of children should make a positive impact on classroom learning environments. On the other hand, as an agent of society, the school cannot limit its efforts to affective needs only. It must also respond to the cognitive needs of children. Thus, this study was concerned with the differential impact of teacher group consultations, with differing content orientations, on children.

Specifically, the major question of the study asked:

What is the differential influence of three teacher group consultation techniques, in the presence and absence of guidance services for children, on the child's feelings of self and peer acceptance?

Implied in the question were observations of the relative

productivity of three teacher group consultation techniques; two with affectively oriented content, and one with cognitively oriented content. Of the two group consultation techniques having affectively oriented content, one provided opportunities for teacher accountability, while the other did not. Teacher accountability was also provided for in the cognitively oriented technique.

The increasing concern with counselor accountability seemed also to require observations of the relative effectiveness of direct v.s. indirect intervention attempts with children. For example, do more benefits accrue to children when counselors work with children or when counselors work with their teachers? Therefore, observations relative to direct intervention with elementary school children as compared with indirect intervention efforts with their significant adults, namely, their teachers, seemed implied.

For these reasons, the major question of this study required observations of the influence of teacher group consultations and guidance services for children on the Self-Perception and Peer Acceptance Scores of children when:

- a. teachers are provided certain group consultation opportunities.
- b. children are provided guidance services.
- c. teachers are provided certain group consultation opportunities and their children are provided guidance services.

Procedures

The study was conducted in three urban elementary school settings in Virginia.* All three schools were racially balanced and two of them housed grades one through five, while the third housed grades one through six. All three schools bussed their pupil populations which were predominantly from lower socio-economic status homes. The teaching faculty of the three schools was also racially balanced.

Each of the three schools received one of the three teacher group consultation treatments, although the total teacher population in each setting was not involved in the treatment, and the children in certain classrooms in each setting did not receive guidance services. For example, teachers were selected from each of the three schools to participate in the group consultations which focused on: (1) individualizing instructional materials through the creation of learning centers; (2) personalizing classroom interactions through discussions of socio-cultural differences and classroom management techniques; and (3) the same treatment as #2 except that the teachers also observed, discussed and analyzed on-site classroom video tapes.

The group consultation activities took place from October, 1972 through May, 1973. During this period of time, twelve group consultation sessions and twelve follow-up clinics were held. The development of individualized instructional materials and the creation of learning centers were introduced and developed at School #1. Discussions were held at School #2, which focused on an understanding of differing socio-cultural groups and classroom

*This research was supported by a Title I grant, 1972-73.

management techniques through group discussions. At School #3 discussions on the topics explored in the group consultations held in School #2 were supplemented with video tapes. The teachers at School #3 were video-taped in their classrooms and analyses of their classroom interactions provided the focus of their group consultation sessions.

In addition, certain classrooms in each of the three schools were provided guidance services, interpreted by a counselor, one and one-half days per week in each school. The children were provided individual and group counseling activities, and classroom group guidance sessions. The counselor was also available to the teachers and parents of these children for individual consultation sessions. Coordinating activities were also performed by the counselor with respect to certain special services and events.

The Design

The design for School #1 identified eleven teachers who received instruction in the development of individualized instructional materials and the creation of learning centers. Six other teachers did not. Among the eleven teachers who were in the group consultation sessions, the children of five of these teachers received guidance services. The children in the classrooms of the other six teachers received no counselor services. Among the six teachers who were not involved in the group consultation sessions, the children of four of these teachers received guidance services. The children of the other two teachers did not.

At School #2, the same design prevailed. Eight teachers were in the group consultation sessions to explore ways to personalize their classroom interactions and another ten teachers were not. Of the eight teachers in the group consultations, the children of four teachers received guidance services and four did not.

Among the ten teachers not involved in the group consultation sessions, the children of four teachers received guidance services and the other six did not.

At School #3, again the same design prevailed. Among the total teacher population of fifteen teachers, ten were involved in the classroom video taping activities and five were not. Among the ten teachers who were video-taped, the children of five of these teachers received guidance services. The children of the other five teachers did not. Among the five teachers who were not involved in the video-taping activities, the children of three of these teachers received guidance services. The children of the other two teachers did not.

The control group was comprised of twenty-one classes, six teachers from School #1, ten teachers from School #2, and five teachers from School #3. Of the twenty-one control classes, the children from eleven classes received guidance services. The children from the remaining ten classes received no guidance services. Thus, children from eleven classes were recipients of guidance services only. The remaining ten classes received neither teacher consultations nor guidance services.

The Participants

The characteristics of the teacher population represented in the three schools are summarized below. The percentage breakdown of teacher characteristics by race and degree and the average years teaching of the fifty participating teachers were as follows:

<u>School</u>	<u>%Race</u>		<u>%Degree</u>		<u>Normal Professional</u>	<u>Avg. Yrs. Teaching</u>
	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Bachelor's</u>	<u>Master's</u>		
#1	47.05	52.95	94.11	5.89	0	7.82
#2	42.85	57.15	85.71	9.52	4.76	10.39
#3	40.00	60.00	80.00	6.67	13.33	14.57

As can be noted, racial balance was present in all schools, and the majority of teachers had received bachelor's degrees. The average years of teaching experience ranged from about eight years at School #1 to nearly an average of 15 years of teaching experience at School #2.

The characteristics of the pupil population are summarized below:

Pupils were approximately equally distributed by sex and by race. A greater number of the 942 pupils were members of the low socio-economic group, but the number of pupils in the middle and upper socio-economic groups was equally distributed:

<u>Sex</u>		<u>Race</u>		<u>Socio-Economic Status</u>		
<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girl</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Middle</u>	<u>Upper</u>
502	440	486	456	365	286	291

In summary, the number of pupils whose teachers were involved in the group consultations totaled 541. The number of pupils whose teachers were not involved in group consultations totaled 401. The total number of pupils who received guidance services was 390, while 552 did not.

The Consultation Methods

Recommendations for effective learning environments suggest that learning experiences be structured toward and adapted to individual needs. One approach to the individualization of instruction suggests that individualization of the curriculum is necessary if the range of individual differences, rates of learning, and readiness for specific learning experiences are to be accommodated in the classroom setting. The teacher group consultation activities at School #1 were designed to implement and observe the influence of this concept through the development of learning centers.

Learning centers permit the use of materials adapted to the ability level and learning rates of children. Therefore, participation in self-directed experiences is held to stimulate a personal relevance for learning, proficiency at decision-making, and practice in "learning how to learn". In the presence of such competencies, increases in a child's feelings of adequacy and personal worth should be observed.

The purpose of the teacher consultation sessions having cognitive content orientation was three-fold: (1) introduction and explanation of the learning center concept; (2) creation and implementation of learning centers in classrooms;

and (3) identification of the role of the teacher with respect to this concept.

The focus of the affectively oriented group consultations with the teachers at Schools #2 and 3 was the impact of certain teaching behaviors on the behavior of others. The teachers were provided opportunities to examine a variety of teacher-pupil communications, verbal and non-verbal, as they influenced the child's feelings of adequacy and personal worth. Specific topic areas for the twelve sessions were:

- Classroom management techniques
- Understanding and developing positive self concepts in children
- Observing pupil behaviors
- Differential learning experiences
- Parent teacher relationships
- Perfectly normal 'abnormalities' of children

The framework within which discussions of these topics took place differed for the two schools. The teachers at School #2 met together and discussed these topics. There was no attempt to hold them accountable for incorporating the recommended techniques into their classroom behaviors. Such was not the case for the teachers at School #3.

The topics for the group consultation sessions at School #3 were not merely discussed for their relevance to teaching behavior in general but also to the teacher's actual teaching behaviors as observed in their video-tapes.

Classroom video-taping opportunities were designed to increase the teachers' need not only to identify and describe, but to utilize the recommended behaviors. Thus, the teachers were being held accountable for the content of the consultation sessions.

Each teacher in School #3 was video-taped three times during the school year; October, January and March. After the taping sessions, the video-tapes were analyzed by members of the project team, and the written critiques were shared with each teacher in a private viewing session. At this time, only effective classroom management techniques utilized by the teacher in her tape were identified to her (Kounin, 1970). Also identified for critiquing were those teaching behaviors which reinforced a child's confidence in his ability to learn by reducing the probability of his responding inappropriately (Dimitroff, 1969; Henry, 1957; Medley, 1963; Rist, 1970). In sum, the teachers' critiques included only positive observations. At the conclusion of the viewing session, the teachers were asked if they would be willing to share their tapes with their peers in the group consultation sessions. None of the teachers ever refused. In the group consultation sessions excerpts from these tapes provided the framework for interacting with discussion topics.

The Data Collection

The data collection procedures were designed to assess the differential influence of three teacher group consultation techniques in the presence and absence of guidance services for children on their Self Perception and Peer Acceptance scores. Therefore, at the introduction and conclusion of the study, those children in grades 3-6 who were participants in the study were administered the Mac B Personal Competence Inventory.*

* The Inventory is included in the ETS Headstart test collection. It has been utilized with black, white, low, middle and upper-middle SES, males, females, grades 3-7, rural, suburban, and inner city populations.

The Inventory, designed for grades 3-7, consists of two indices of affective behavior:

1. Peer Acceptance Index. This instrument was designed to obtain a measure of the degree of acceptance or rejection of a pupil by his classmates. Each pupil was rated on a five-point scale by each of his classmates; a pupil's individual score was a composite of his classmates' ratings. The degree of socialization or likeability among pupils was evidenced by a classroom or group average.

2. Self Perceptions Index. This test was based in part on the rationale presented in the Virginia Educational Needs Assessment (1970). In addition to the psychologically based items, sociological and cultural measures of classroom climate were included (Rist, 1970). Three factors were identified from a factor analysis of the pre-test administration: Self to Self; Self to Others, and Self to Culture.

These were the instruments employed to measure the relative influence of the activities of the study.

Analysis and Findings

The intent of the study was (1) to observe changes in the Peer Acceptance Index scores of those children who received guidance services, (2) to observe changes in the Peer Acceptance Index scores of those children whose teachers participated in the consultation groups, and (3) to observe the differential influence of guidance services for children and teacher group consultations.

Additionally, changes in the Self Perceptions Index scores were observed in the presence and absence of guidance services for children in combination with the presence and absence of teacher consultation groups.

An analysis was made of the pupils' affective scores with respect to the three teacher consultation groups in the

presence and absence of guidance services for children.

A correlated t test was run to determine any mean changes in the Peer Acceptance Index scores, and the Self Perceptions Index scores for each of the three treatment groups and the control group. This analysis was conducted to determine which among the three teacher consultation groups influenced changes in peer acceptance and self perception scores and how each teacher consultation approach was related to guidance services for children.

Presented below are the mean gains for the teacher consultation group approaches in the presence and absence of guidance services for children. Significant positive changes were observed for the Peer Acceptance scores of those children whose teachers were involved in group consultations with affectively oriented content.

<u>Teacher Consultation Groups</u>				
	<u>Guidance Services</u>		<u>No Guidance Services</u>	
	<u>t-value</u>	<u>2-tail prob.</u>	<u>t-value</u>	<u>2-tail prob.</u>
(Individualizing Instructional Materials -				
Peer Acceptance	-1.16	.258	.88	.384
Self Perceptions	-2.57	.017	-1.77	.084
(Personalizing Classroom Interactions -				
Peer Acceptance	2.23	.030	-1.24	.220
Self Perceptions	-1.60	.116	-3.48	.001
(Classroom Video-Taping -				
Peer Acceptance	2.28	.026	7.52	.000
Self Perceptions	-1.98	.051	-2.67	.009

On the other hand, no significant increases were observed for the cognitively oriented teacher group. It should also be noted that significantly positive changes occurred in the Peer Acceptance Index scores of the children in School #3 even when the children themselves received no guidance services.

Significant decreases were observed for the Self Perception Index scores of those children whose teachers were involved in affectively oriented group consultations if they themselves received no guidance services. Similar observations were noted for the scores of those children whose teachers were involved in cognitively oriented consultations if they themselves did receive guidance services.

The significant mean changes for each group is summarized below:

1. Significant increases in Peer Acceptance scores were observed for children who received guidance services when their teachers were involved in group consultations which focused on affective content.
2. Significant increases in Peer Acceptance scores were observed for children who received no guidance services when their teachers were involved in group consultations which focused on affective content and which permitted observations of their teaching behavior.
3. Significant decreases in Self Perception scores were observed for children who received no guidance services when their teachers were involved in group consultations which focused on affective content.

4. Significant decreases in Self Perception scores were observed for children who received guidance services when their teachers were involved in group consultations which focused on cognitive content.

The pre and post test mean comparisons for peer acceptance and self perceptions classified by teacher group consultations versus guidance services for children are presented below.

	<u>Mean Difference</u>	<u>t-value</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>2-tail prob.</u>
(1) Teacher Group Consultations and Guidance Services for Children				
Peer Acceptance	.0774	2.54	154	.012
Self Perceptions	-3.1216	-3.19	147	.002
(2) Teacher Group Consultations and No Guidance Services for Children				
Peer Acceptance	.1099	4.47	234	.000
Self Perceptions	-3.7982	-4.42	227	.000
(3) No Teacher Group Consultations and Guidance Services for Children				
Peer Acceptance	.1145	4.23	192	.000
Self Perceptions	-2.4946	-2.74	185	.007
(4) No Teacher Group Consultations and No Guidance Services for Children				
Peer Acceptance	-.0186	-.59	327	.558
Self Perceptions	-2.7190	-2.98	209	.003

It can be observed that pupils classified into groups 1, 2, and 3, made significant gains in Peer Acceptance. For example, significant increases were observed for those children in group 1, whose teachers were involved in group consultations when they themselves received guidance services. The children in group 2 whose teachers were involved in group consultations,

although they themselves received no guidance services, also made significant gains. The children in group 3 whose teachers did not participate in group consultations but who themselves received guidance services, were also observed to make significant gains. The children in group 4, the control group, who did not receive guidance services nor did their teachers participate in group consultations, showed no significant mean gain in peer acceptance. As can also be noted, a significant loss in the Total Self Perceptions Index scores was observed for all four groups.

Discussion and Implications

The findings of the study would seem to endorse consulting with teachers as a viable and productive activity for elementary school counselors since it permits additional opportunities for increasing the degree of likability among children. Also implied for this indirect technique were certain considerations regarding the nature and content orientation of the teacher group consultations. Differential influences on a child's feelings of personal worth and adequacy as well as his degree of likability might be expected with regard to affectively v.s. cognitively oriented content and with regard to teacher accountability considerations.

The findings also suggest that increases in the degree of likability among children can be expected from direct techniques. The program of guidance services was observed to increase positively the Peer Acceptance scores of the children. On the other hand, those children who received no guidance services at all but whose teachers were involved in video-tape

teacher group consultations, were the group of children who made the greatest gains.

Regarding direct versus indirect, affective versus cognitive, and teacher accountability versus none, the findings seem to have generated the following propositions.

1. If children are provided guidance services, the influence of teacher group consultations on the degree of likability among children will be related to the content orientation of the consultation activities.

If the teacher group consultations are:

- a. affectively oriented, then significant increases in the degree of likability among children will occur.
 - b. cognitively oriented, then the degree of likability among children will be unchanged.
2. If children are not provided guidance services, the influence of teacher group consultations on the degree of likability among children will be related to affective content orientation which includes teacher accountability.

If the teacher group consultations are:

- a. affectively oriented with teacher accountability, then the degree of likability among children will increase significantly.
- b. affectively oriented without teacher accountability, then the degree of likability among children will be unchanged.
- c. cognitively oriented with teacher accountability then, the degree of likability among children will be unchanged.

Regarding the significant losses observed for the Self Perception scores of the children, several observations can be made. First, these losses were observed to occur in the presence of: (1) guidance services for children; (2) affectively oriented teacher group consultations; (3) significant gains in the Peer Acceptance scores; and (4) no treatment at all. Thus, the findings seem to have generated these additional propositions.

3. If children are provided guidance services, the influence of teacher group consultations on the feelings of personal adequacy of children will be related to the content orientation of the consultation activities. If the teacher group consultations are:

a. affectively oriented then there will be no change in a child's feelings of personal adequacy.

b. cognitively oriented then the child's feelings of personal adequacy will decrease significantly.

4. If children are not provided guidance services, the influence of teacher group consultations on the feelings of personal adequacy of children will be related to the content orientation of the teacher group consultations. If the consultations are:

a. affectively oriented then the child's feelings of personal adequacy will decrease significantly.

b. cognitively oriented then the child's feelings of personal adequacy will be unchanged.

A variety of explanations for the significant drop in the child's feelings of self worth and adequacy were explored. One was related to the decrease observed for the control group. For example, the phenomenon might be explained as a function of time and socio-economic status. The literature on lower socio-economic status suggests that as the school child grows older, he becomes more certain of his inadequacies (Deutsch, 1949; Dimitroff, 1969; Horowitz, 1939; Morse, 1964; Rist, 1970). Other explanations included those proposed in a previous study with similar findings which served as the background for the present study (Brown and MacDougall, 1973).

At that time it was reasoned that greater self-insight and/or increased insights into the behavior of others tends to influence a downward movement of the Self Perceptions report. For example, it was proposed that the more one learns about others, the less anxious one becomes to claim positive attributes for oneself. Perhaps this reflects a more comfortable and less defensive stature regarding self-in-relation-to-environment. Thus, learning to understand and accept others may also help children to understand and accept themselves. On the other hand, the former may require less time than the latter and this proposition was explored in a follow-up study on the pupil population reported on in the above referred to background study (Brown and MacDougall, 1973). At the termination of an additional twelve months, significant increases in the Self Perception scores of the children were observed (Project IMPACT, 1973). If these observations have implications for

the present study, then the significant decrease might be viewed as only a temporary adjustment to a new perception of self-in-relation-to-environment.

In summary, the critical nature of the affective dimension of learning recommends that elementary school counselors consult with classroom teachers concerning the learning process as it relates to the interdependence of the cognitive and affective domains. Counselors through their consulting activities, can help teachers learn those classroom interactions which facilitate more effective learning environments. Further, elementary school counselors can help both teachers and children toward increased understandings of the influence of their own behavior on the behavior of others. Finally, it is suggested that more effective learning environments can accrue from effective and efficient interpretations of consulting functions by elementary school counselors.

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